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ABSTRACT

The National Institute for Literacy's Equipped for the Future initiative was undertaken to achieve customer-driven, standards-based reform of adult literacy and lifelong learning through a broad, national consensus-building process. The initiative's six stages are as follows: (1) build consensus on the knowledge and skills adults need to fulfill their responsibilities as parents, citizens, and workers; (2) develop content standards and performance indicators that translate the knowledge and skills into results for adult literacy/basic skills; (3) pilot the standards at adult learning sites across the country; (4) determine how to focus the adult literacy/basic skills system on achieving the desired results; (5) identify the resources required to ensure that the system can be held accountable for meeting results; and (6) establish quality assurance systems requiring continuous improvement based on continuous assessment of results. The initiative is now in the third phase of stage one. To date, more than 1,500 adults have been surveyed to determine what they need from the adult literacy/lifelong learning system to meet their responsibilities as parents, citizens, and workers, and the survey findings have been synthesized into parent, citizen, and worker "role maps," which are presented. (A glossary and list of contact persons are included.) (MN)

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Equipped for the future

A Reform Agenda for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

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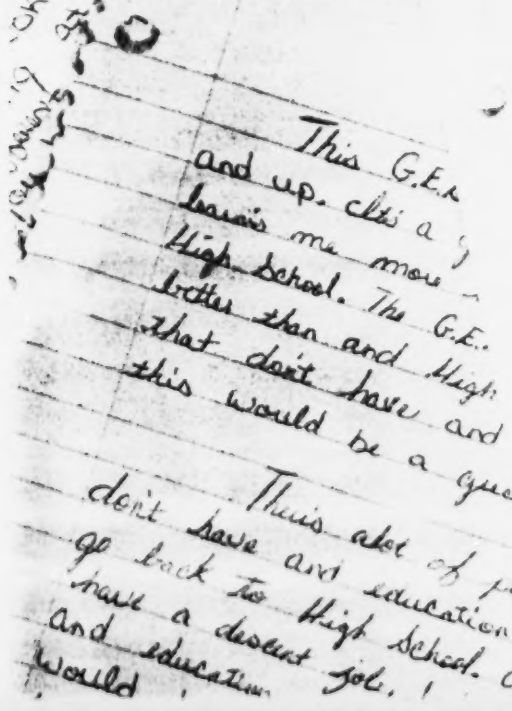
Literacy is about reading, but it's about much more, too. It's about opportunity, giving people the tools to make the most of their God-given potential. It's about preparing people for the 21st Century, when a fully literate work force will be crucial to our strength as a nation. Without literacy the history books and job manuals are closed, the Internet is turned off, and the promise of America is much harder to reach.

President William J. Clinton

Radio Address to the Nation
December 21, 1996



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Equipped for the Future:

A Reform Agenda for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

by

Sondra Gayle Stein

National Institute for Literacy

February 1997

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

Dear Colleague:

In 1995, The National Institute for Literacy published ***Equipped for the Future**: A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning*. Since that first report, the pace of change in the world has accelerated, anxiety about the future has increased for millions of Americans, and the need is even greater for a literacy and lifelong learning system that can deliver the skills and knowledge adults need now and in the future.

To meet this challenge, it will not be enough just to provide more of what we currently offer adult students. Everyone concerned about helping adults prepare themselves for an unknown future must join together in a process to reform the nation's literacy and lifelong learning system. Tinkering is not the answer. We must create a consensus of support for the very real changes students are trying to make in their lives, identify the essential skills and knowledge they need to move successfully into the future, and build a reliable system that can make their hopes a new reality.

Such an undertaking is not a short-term, one-shot effort, and it is not something that can be done in isolation. The goals set out by *Equipped for the Future* will take years to reach, and the results will need to be continuously reexamined and revised. Trying first to envision and then to stimulate the creation of a new literacy and lifelong learning system is not something the NIFL or any other organization can do alone. We are only acting as conveyor and catalyst for what is already a broad-based movement involving students, educators, the private sector, and policymakers—the people who know the most, care the most, and have the most at stake. I firmly believe this consensus effort must continue and grow if we want to raise our field to a new level of support, quality, and results.

***Equipped for the Future**: A Reform Agenda for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning* lays out a bold plan in a time of uncertainty and opportunity, and the NIFL is committed to following it through. If the talent and energy that enlivens our field is focused on making the EFF vision a reality, we can succeed. I hope that everyone who reads this report will be inspired to get involved. There's room—and need—for all of you!

Sincerely,

Andy Hartman

Andrew Hartman
Director

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Acknowledgements

From the moment we first asked adult learners what they needed to know and be able to do to achieve the National Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal in their lives, ***Equipped for the Future*** has been a collaborative venture. So many members of the adult learning community have helped to shape this initiative that it is difficult to know how to properly acknowledge the thousands of insights and contributions, large and small, that have brought us to where we are today. This collaborative spirit is the strength of *Equipped for the Future.*

Some people have been especially important in helping to shape and preserve that spirit—first, of course, the 1500 adult learners whose responses to our initial request inspired us and gave us so much to think about. Their words continue to bring new voices into the circle and to energize the ongoing development of *Equipped for the Future.*

Second are the eight organizations that received planning grants in 1995 and helped us test the resiliency of the *Equipped for the Future* framework. During our first meeting they made the transition from grantees to partners, joining the NIFL in trying to create a framework that would work for the whole system. To each of them many thanks for long hours, strenuous efforts, and commitment to listening to other voices and getting it right. Particular thanks to Sandy Brawders, Lisa Levinson, Juliet Merrifield, Mary Jane Schmitt, Ronna Spacone, and Tom Sticht, who served as a project working group, helping think through the work at each stage and synthesize results across all eight projects to construct our role maps and working framework.

With so much happening on the ground, it would have been easy to get lost in the details. In April, 1996 we convened a National Policy Group to help us look at the big picture, including how to connect *Equipped for the Future* to ongoing system reform efforts in K-12 and workforce development. As a group and as individuals, the Policy Group has offered much valuable guidance and feedback, making sure that we ask all the hard questions, even if we don't know the answers.

Our federal interagency partners have also worked closely with us to assure that *Equipped for the Future* has strong links to other initiatives. Many thanks to Mary Jean Letendre and Pat McKee of the Department of Education's Office of Compensatory Programs for their commitment to working with us to strengthen the parent education side of Even Start, to Trish McNeil for making sure *Equipped for the Future* is integrated with Office of Vocational and Adult Education initiatives, and to the Department of Labor's Ray Uhalde, Geri Fiala, Bob Litman, Donna Dye, and Libby Queen for helping us build a bridge from this project to O*NET as a way to make sure every adult has access to the education they need to get good jobs at good wages.

While many Federal agencies have turned to national research organizations to develop standards, the leaders of the National Institute for Literacy—our Advisory Board, Director Andy Hartman, and Deputy Director Carolyn Staley—have understood the importance of keeping *Equipped for the Future* field-based, moving forward through broad consensus-building. Our standards development team includes adult learning programs in 15 states led by five organizations with strong histories of innovation in program and staff development. Their commitment to collaborative learner-centered research approaches has been balanced by the expertise in standards development of Louise Bertsche, Joan Knapp, Kathy Mannes, and Eric Rice—our technical assistance team. By holding our feet to the fire of valid and reliable research methodology, they are helping us make sure we achieve our vision.

Last but not least, thanks to all the staff at the NIFL who have provided daily support and encouragement, inspiring me with their belief in our common mission—to make sure every adult has the opportunity to learn what they need to be *Equipped for the Future.*

Sondra Stein
EFF National Director

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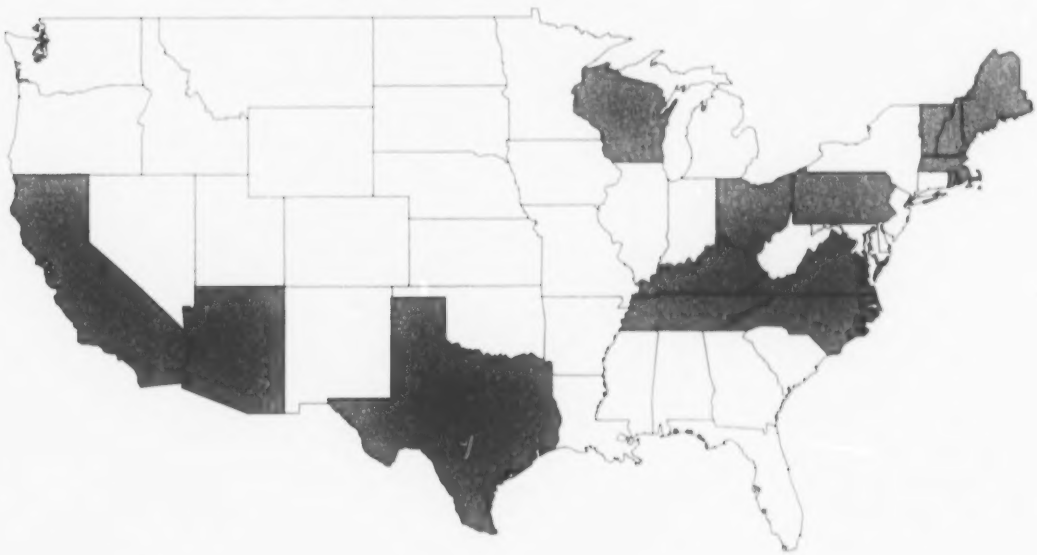
Consortium for the Role of Worker led by:	The Center for Adult Literacy and Learning University of Maine-Orono Lisa Levinson, Project Director

State Partners: Arizona, California, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin



Chapter 1

Equipping Americans for the Future

For too long we have approached adult literacy and lifelong learning as if its purpose is to make up for something adults didn't get in the past. Now we know that its purpose is to prepare adults for the future—to build on what they have already learned through experience as well as formal education, to prepare them for new, unanticipated responsibilities in the present, and to provide them with the tools to enable them to continue to learn. In short, the task before adult educators today is nothing less than to equip their students for the future.

> "Without an education in the year 2000, we the people will be in serious trouble. Because now everything is moving forward fast, and without an education you will be moving nowhere."
>
> *Brenda Harris, Adult Learner*
> *Jackson, Mississippi*

A customer-driven, standards-based reform process. The National Institute for Literacy's (NIFL) *Equipped for the Future* Initiative aims to make this revolutionary goal a reality. Starting with a clear, customer-driven vision of what adults need to know and be able to do in order to be equipped for the future, this initiative has begun to engage the adult literacy and lifelong learning field in a process of standards-based system reform.

Our method:

- A broad, national consensus-building process that engages an ever-widening circle of adult learners, teachers, and other key customers and investors in defining the results of our system.

Our goals:

- To refocus our adult literacy and lifelong learning system on delivering results that matter.
- To make sure that all adults who seek to strengthen their knowledge and skills will have access to a system that is explicitly designed to equip them for the future.
- To accelerate our progress, as a nation, toward achieving the national adult literacy and lifelong learning goal.

By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

National Education Goal 6
The Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal

Equipped for the Future began in 1993 with a question: "What is it that adults need to know and be able to do in order to be literate, compete in the global economy, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship?" Its answer is vital to the future of the nation.

Preparing Americans for a changing world. We know that the world has changed enormously in the past forty years. The revolutions in technology and telecommunications mean that we are flooded with information, pressed to make decisions based on that information, hurtling through changes in how we work and live at a speed that was unimaginable when we were children. We know, too, that our education system—for both children and adults—has not kept pace with these changes. We express grave concern about the failure of the system to prepare young people and adults for their changed responsibilities in this new world, yet we haven't stopped to develop a clear picture of what these changes have meant in the everyday lives of Americans as parents, as citizens, and as workers.

In his most recent book, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, developmental psychologist Robert Kegan gives us some sense of the impact of these changes.[1] He invites us to think about our culture as a school, in which

"We live in an Age of Possibility. A hundred years ago, we moved from the farm to the factory.

Now we are moving into a global society where ideas and information and money and technology and people move around the world in unimaginable speed and variation, compared to just a few years ago.

We know that the young people standing on this stage will actually do work that has not even been invented yet . . .

So we are moving into a period really unlike any in the history of our country before, when there will be more opportunity for people to live out their dreams . . .

And the real challenge, I believe is to make sure that every person has a chance to live out those dreams . . . education can either be the fault line dividing our country or the bridge by which we all walk into the 21st Century."

President William J. Clinton
Remarks to Presidential Scholars
June 20, 1996

our roles as workers, parents and family members, citizens and community members are the subjects we must master. Using this metaphor reminds us to ask, "What is the curriculum in this school?" Is it the same curriculum as when our parents assumed these roles or when we first began to learn them? Or have the changes noted above—in technology and telecommunications, in the mobility that has stretched the bonds of family and loosened the connections of civic life—have these changes resulted in a new curriculum, a curriculum we are expected to have mastered without being told clearly what it is? Kegan believes the lack of fit between how we have been prepared for our adult roles and the demands these roles actually make on us gives rise to the anxiety of modern life, the feeling expressed by many adult learners that we are "in over our heads."

Measuring our progress toward Goal Six. When Congress asked the National Institute for Literacy to measure America's progress toward Goal Six, the National Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal, the Institute was confronted by the lack of consensus on what adults needed to know and be able to do to achieve this goal. While many of the other national goals established in 1990 by the Governors and President Bush for improving our education system are specific enough to be measurable, the Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal is broad and rhetorical; it focuses on the mission, rather than on measurable objectives for our public education system. As a result, the NIFL found there was no agreement on what achievement of this goal would look like.

A nation falling behind. At the same time, there was increasing evidence that too many adult Americans did not have the skills needed to achieve this goal. The National Adult Literacy Survey, conducted in 1991 and 1992, revealed that the literacy skills of nearly half of all adults were not good enough to assure the American dream—good jobs at good wages. The International Adult Literacy Survey, completed the following year, confirmed these findings: while the U.S. continues to lead the world in assuring high quality opportunities for higher education, the picture is considerably less rosy for those not going on to college. Compared to seven other industrialized countries, including many of our most important competitors in the global economy, the U.S. had the highest percentage of workers performing at the lowest literacy levels.[2]

Concerned about the implications of these findings for America's global competitiveness, Congress found little evidence that the federally-funded system for delivering adult literacy and basic skills services was effectively addressing this need.[3] The title of a 1995 U.S. General Accounting Office Report to Congress illustrates the problem succinctly—*Adult Education: Measuring Program Results Has Been Challenging*.[4] The report describes the myriad difficulties in evaluating a system that operates without clearly defined objectives, appropriate student assessments, and accurate data.

The GAO's comprehensive indictment of Adult Education is supported by two other studies conducted at the same time; a three-year *National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs*[5] conducted for the U.S. Department of Education by Development Associates,

Inc., and a *Review of Adult Education Programs and Their Effectiveness*, also conducted for the U.S. Department of Education to help prepare a case for reauthorization.[6]

What the studies tell us. The data provided in these reports help us understand the conditions that have contributed to the poor accountability of the Federal adult education program:

- **Students don't stay in programs long enough to make significant progress.** The Development Associates report documents median retention of less than 60 hours of instruction across all adult education programs. Adults who are native English speakers, with the lowest skill levels, accumulate no more than 35 hours of instruction before dropping out. We worry about progress and achievement in the K-12 system when the school year falls below 180 days. How can we expect recognizable progress for adults with so few hours of instruction?

- **Programs operate without a consistent vision of what is important to teach.** More than half of all programs (56 percent) emphasize school-based subject matter in contrast to life skills or workplace skills. They take a remedial approach, focusing on making up for what adults didn't get when they were children in school, rather than a customer-centered approach, focusing on preparing adults for the demands in their lives today.

- **Programs operate without a corps of full time, professional educators.** Eighty percent of instructors are hired as part-time teachers. Sixty percent of programs have no full time teachers at all. It is hard for teachers to be fully responsive to student needs, let alone keep up with new knowledge about best practices, when they are paid only for hours of instruction.

- **Program resources are not adequate.** In each of the five years since the National Literacy Act became law, combined federal, state and local resources for the adult education system have totaled approximately $1.1 billion. If we base our estimate of the number of adults in need on National Adult Literacy Survey data, we end up with roughly $258 per year per adult student. This compares to a combined budget of $248.6 billion for K-12 education, approximately $5,721 per K-12 student.[7]

A system that can't assess itself can't improve itself. Although inadequate resources are clearly part of the problem, more money alone cannot solve problems caused by the diffuseness of the system—its failure to define clear goals based on an up-to-date analysis of customer needs and to focus resources on strategies that work in achieving those goals. As the GAO Report makes clear, these problems are at the heart of what's wrong with the current system.

Without a coherent vision based on a real-world assessment of the knowledge and skills adults need, it is impossible to hold local programs accountable for achieving specific objectives or to define clear criteria for measuring achievement. Without agreement on what knowledge and skills the curriculum is supposed to build, even the best teachers can't design teaching and learning strategies that will be effective. In short, without a clear statement of system goals the adult literacy system can't be held accountable for achieving an agreed upon set of results. And if those goals are not based on a customer-driven vision, there is no way to assure that the results the system does produce make a real difference in adults' lives.

The challenges we face. Given the current system's inability to show that it consistently delivers results that matter, it is not difficult to understand why adult literacy and lifelong learning does not have a higher policy profile. Legislators and policy makers vote with their priorities and budgets. Because adult educators cannot point to clear results, policy makers can't count adult education as an important part of the country's investment in our economic and political future.

From ***Adult Education: Measuring Program Results Has Been Challenging***

"Evaluating program results depends on having clearly defined objectives as well as criteria for measuring the achievement of those objectives.. The broad objectives of the . . . Program give the states the flexibility to set up their own priorities but . . . they do not provide states with sufficient direction for measuring results .

. . . Several experts and program officials told us that the Program lacks a coherent vision of the skills and knowledge adults need to be considered literate.."

(GAO Report, p. 23)

Nor is it difficult to understand the high attrition rate across the adult literacy system. Given the many demands on their time, and the need for higher-level skills to keep up with the rapid pace of change, adult learners don't have time to sit in programs that aren't designed to equip them for the future.

Goal Six must be important to those people I help elect. They have to provide a system where—unlike me—young people receive an education which prepares them for a part in the system. They must demand literacy. By doing this, the United States should be the leader in the global economy. I'm willing to do my part.

Robert Tooher, Adult Learner
Providence, Rhode Island

By the year 2000 my daughter will be 16 years of age. She will be a high school sophomore. What will our system be like for her then? What will her goals be? What will we she need to know and learn to achieve those goals?

Lisa Oxford, Adult Learner
Hudson, North Carolina

Chapter 2

Building Consensus:
Listening to Customers of the Adult Literacy System

Seeking to establish a clear vision of how the adult literacy system can help adults achieve Goal Six, the National Institute for Literacy turned to adults who are the customers of our adult literacy and lifelong learning system. We asked them several questions:

- **What does it mean, in your community, to compete in the global economy?**
- **How do you define the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the U.S. today?**
- **What knowledge and skills do adults need in order to fulfill these responsibilities?**

More than 1500 adults responded, providing us with rich information about what they saw as the chief responsibilities of their roles as workers, citizens, community members, and parents, and what they expected to gain from formal learning opportunities to help them fulfill those responsibilities. Their responses yielded a consensus on four fundamental purposes for adult learning:

- ACCESS:
  to information so adults can orient themselves in the world.
- VOICE:
  to be able to express ideas and opinions with the confidence they will be heard and taken into account.
- INDEPENDENT ACTION:
  to be able to solve problems and make decisions on one's own, acting independently, without having to rely on others.
- BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE:
  learning how to learn so adults can keep up with the world as it changes.

These four purposes for learning provide a strong starting point for refocusing our mission in adult education. They enable us to move toward a consensus definition of the Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal that is specific enough to guide teaching and learning, precise enough to use as a benchmark for measuring progress and success, and, most important, based on broad customer input to assure that we will deliver results that matter.

In *Equipped for the Future: A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning*, we summarized the potential impact of these purposes on the delivery of adult literacy and lifelong learning this way:

> When adults talk about what they need to be able to do in order to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, their definitions move through the need for access and orientation to focus on tasks and practices associated with voice, self reliant action and keeping up with change.
>
> - They want to understand more about the world so they can teach their children about right and wrong.
> - They want to be able to read the news so they can make good decisions about political candidates and issues.
> - They want to learn new skills so they can keep up with changes in the world around them.
> - They want to complete their own education to set an example for their children of the importance of education for survival and success in rapidly changing world.
>
> No matter how elementary or advanced their basic reading and oral comprehension skills, adults are also interested in learning and strengthening the skills associated with using information to have an impact on the world.
>
> They identify the need to develop the problem solving and critical thinking skills that have to do with analyzing and reflecting on information in order to make good decisions, and the writing and speaking skills that have to do with how you present what you have thought about so your ideas can be heard and "counted." Having such skills enables adults to "own" information, in the sense of being able to use it to accomplish their own purposes. It is also a necessary precondition for enabling adults to transfer learning from one discrete situation to another. From adults perspective, this kind of learning transfer is critical to not being left behind.[8]

Chapter 3

Standards-Based System Reform:
Defining Common Benchmarks for Continuous Improvement

Equipped for the Future's vision for how to improve the adult literacy and lifelong learning system gets to the heart of the problem identified by the General Accounting Office Report. Starting with adult learners' perceptions of what they need to know and be able to do in order to achieve Goal Six, *Equipped for the Future* provides a framework for defining system results that moves away from a remedial focus on generic academic disciplines, toward a more integrated, customer-driven approach to literacy and learning that focuses on the three adult roles addressed in Goal Six and the four fundamental purposes for learning.

Adult Education and Lifelong Learning A New Approach to Success	
Current System	**21st Century System**
Education only happens when you're young, and is preparation for action in life.	Education is action; it happens throughout life, preparing for changing needs and interests.
Adult education is remedial, making up for inadequate preparation in the past.	Adult education is preparation for the future, enabling people to meet the demands in their lives today and in the future.
Adult education focuses on key academic disciplines, as in K-12 education.	Adult education focuses on what adults need to know and be able to do to succeed as parents, citizens and workers. It integrates core skills and knowledge, with their application across contexts.
Content of education is provider-driven, based on school-based notions of what is important.	Content of education is customer-driven, shaped by what adults say they need to know to succeed in the world.
Specific competencies are the highest order of achievement.	Generative skills and knowledge are the highest order of achievement.
Progress is measured in relation to grade levels or isolated skills.	Progress is measured in relation to capacity to organize experience and perform real-world tasks.
Adult education is primarily cognitive.	Adult education is developmental as well as cognitive.
Adult education prepares students for present time and present knowledge.	Adult education prepares students for the present and the future, expanding their ability to explore new knowledge.

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How will this common framework be used to improve our adult literacy and lifelong learning system? Like other efforts to assure our public education and training systems produce graduates who are equipped for effective performance in their adult roles, *Equipped for the Future* is moving forward with standards-based system reform.

Standards-based system reform. Standards-based system reform uses consensus on what the results of the system should be as the starting point for building a more effective educational delivery system. In the K-12 system, these results have been defined as what mathematics, science, or English literature and language we expect students to know and be able to use at key intervals in the education process, usually the end of fifth, eighth, and twelfth grade. In *Equipped for the Future*, we are defining those results as what adults need to know and be able to do to achieve the four purposes in relation to their roles as parents and family members, citizens and community members, and workers.

> **In standards-based education reform**, we are aiming to establish an objective, widely acknowledged definition of what is of value; a definition that can then be used by any of us and all of us as a comparison point to measure:
>
> - **"How far am I from the standard?"**
> - **"How far are my students from the standard?"**
> - **"How well are we doing—as an institution . . . a city . . . a state . . . a nation—in achieving the standard?"**
>
> The desire of learners, parents, teachers, employers and politicians to have answers to these questions—answers they understand, answers that stand the test of time, answers that have a real-world meaning—has been the driving force behind standards-based reform.

Right now, *Equipped for the Future* is conducting a broad consensus-building process to validate "role maps" that will provide a clear picture of these results (see Chapter 4). These role maps will link knowledge, skills, and abilities to the broad areas of responsibility and key activities identified for each role. They will be the starting point for defining content and performance standards that clearly describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the adult literacy system will focus on as its contribution to achieving those results. Once these standards are established, they can be used as a public benchmark to assess how well the adult literacy and lifelong learning system is doing in achieving desired results.

Equipped for the Future has chosen the path of standards-based reform because we believe that standards that reflect up-to-date, real-world requirements can help us build a more effective adult literacy and lifelong learning system.

Who benefits from standards-based reform? In standards-based system reform, teachers who want to be sure that their students build the knowledge and skills they need use the standards as a common framework for curriculum, instruction, assessment and evaluation. Program administrators and policy makers use them as a touchstone to identify what needs to change and what needs to be done better *within the system* to enable all students to achieve those standards.

It is this process of monitoring how well the system is doing in achieving desired results—and introducing changes aimed at producing better results—that is the essence of standards-based reform.

The path to an improved system. *Equipped for the Future* standards will help us build a better system by:

- **Making explicit our contributions**—defining what and how the adult literacy and basic skills system contributes to helping individuals, communities, and, by extension, our nation achieve broad goals for social stability and economic growth. Because the standards will make clear what the system intends to contribute, they will be a mechanism for communicating what customers and stakeholders in that system can expect.

- **Producing successful graduates**—which enables other programs, like vocational training programs, and other institutions, like community schools and workplaces, to make plans with the assurance that adults who come to them from adult literacy programs have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful.

- **Increasing public support and funding**—by giving the adult literacy and lifelong learning system an opportunity to count its successes in a way that is clear and comprehensible to the taxpayers who support the system, and to the public officials who authorize funding. Policy makers will have the evidence they need to understand how adult literacy and lifelong learning programs contribute to employability and self-sufficiency.

Four Criteria for *Equipped for the Future* Standards

Equipped for the Future standards will be:

1. Written in language that is clear, simple and direct, so that the many varied customers and investors in the adult education system know what results they can expect.

2. Comprehensive enough to demystify the route to success for adult learners unsure what they need to know and be able to do to accomplish their goals.

3. Specific enough to be useful to teachers without dictating curriculum, materials, or methods.

4. Focused enough to be useful to suppliers, like text book publishers, software developers, and assessment and testing specialists.

- **Allowing the adult education system to improve itself**—through standards that embody a clear, commonly agreed upon vision of desired results that will guide the system improvement tools of technical assistance, training, research and development, and provide a mechanism for evaluating the impact of those tools on learner success.

- **Providing a dynamic mechanism for assuring that the system can keep on doing its job**—ten, fifteen, twenty years from now, as the world continues to change and adult responsibilities change with it.

Chapter 4

Mapping Responsibilities:
What Adults Need to Know and Be Able to Do

The key to broad and enduring usefulness for the *Equipped for the Future* standards is their ability to accurately reflect up-to-date, real-world requirements. The goal of public education has always been to prepare Americans to carry out adult responsibilities. However, our educational institutions can only achieve this goal if the maps of adult responsibilities used to set a direction for teaching and learning match these responsibilities as we live them today. That is why the *Equipped for the Future* standards development process begins not with what we teach and learn in school, but with re-mapping what it means for adults to "compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." Only in this way can we be sure that the content of our adult literacy and lifelong learning system will prepare adults for what they need to know and be able to do in their daily lives.

Starting with what adults from many different walks of life have told us over the past two years, *Equipped for the Future* has begun to map the broad areas of responsibility and related key activities for each of the three adult roles—parent, citizen, and worker—identified in the Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal.

These real-life portraits of adult responsibilities are called "role maps." This name underscores how they will be used—as up-to-date tools for charting our educational journeys as workers, parents and family members, citizens and community members. To serve this purpose well, the role maps must represent an objective, widely acknowledged definition of the broad areas of responsibility and the key activities essential for fulfilling these responsibilities, across racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. And they must include a detailed elaboration of the knowledge, skills, and abilities critical to successful performance under a variety of conditions. Then adults can use these maps to chart a course to their chosen destination, tracking their own progress in relation to the knowledge and skills requisite to increasingly more satisfying performance of role responsibilities.

The role maps on the next pages synthesize what we have learned so far from adults who have participated in the *Equipped for the Future* consensus-building process. They include only the first level of detail—the identification of **Broad Areas of Responsibility (BARs)** and **Key Activities**—that represent the consensus to date on what it means to "compete in a global economy," "exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship," and "maintain a strong and healthy family." These provide the starting point for on-going consensus-building, validation and standards development throughout 1997.

PARENT ROLE MAP

An effective parent/family member provides for needs of all family members

Manage a Family

- Provide for emotional needs.
- Provide for physical needs.
- Form and maintain supportive family relationships.
- Find and use community resources and services.
- Manage time and resources.

Plan and Manage Personal Growth

- Create vision of future for self and other family members including children and work to achieve it.
- Pursue personal self-improvement.
- Give and receive support outside immediate family.

Equipped for the future

Support Children's Development

- Serve as role model for child.
- Pass on values, ethics, and cultural heritage.
- Teach children.
- Establish rules and expectations for children's behavior.
- Participate in children's formal education.
- Provide nurturing home environment.

CITIZEN ROLE MAP

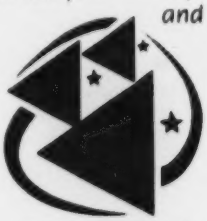
Effective citizens and community members take informed action to make a positive difference in their lives, communities, and world

Become and Stay Informed

- Identify and monitor problems, community needs, strengths and resources.
- Recognize and understand your human and legal rights and civic responsibilities.
- Figure out how systems (political, economic, and social service) work.
- Find, interpret, and analyze diverse sources of information (including own experience).
- Identify how to have an impact.

Form and Express Opinions and Ideas

- Develop a sense of self that reflects your history, values, beliefs and roles in the larger community.
- Listen to and learn from others' experiences and ideas.
- Communicate so that others understand.
- Reflect on and reevaluate your opinions and ideas.



Equipped for the future

Take Action to Strengthen Communities

- Help self and others.
- Educate self and others.
- Exercise your human and legal rights and civic responsibilities.
- Influence decision makers and hold them accountable.
- Be a leader within your communities.

Working Together

- Get involved in the community and get others involved.
- Respect others and value diversity.

- Define common values and goals and resolve conflict.
- Participate in group processes and decision making.

WORKER ROLE MAP

An effective worker keeps pace with the demands of a changing economy.

Doing the Work

- Organize, plan, and prioritize work and use resources.
- Manage work processes and resources.
- Use technology and other work tools.
- Put ideas and directions into action.

- Meet new work challenges.
- Take responsibility for work quality and results.

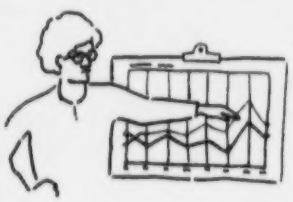
Working With Others

- Communicate with others inside and outside the organization.
- Direct and motivate others.
- Teach and develop others.
- Assist others.
- Negotiate differences and build common plans.
- Develop and maintain relationships with others.

Equipped for the future

Managing the Work Context

- Use organizational goals, performance, structure, culture, and values to inform actions.
- Employ information on industry trends and competitive forces to guide work activities.



Planning and Directing Personal and Professional Growth

- Plan and renew career goals.
- Base planning on labor market information.

- Find and get a job.
- Learn new skills.
- Balance and support work, career, and personal goals.

By developing these role maps as a starting point for reforming the adult literacy and lifelong learning system, *Equipped for the Future* proposes nothing less than to demystify the route to success for adults in our society. To understand the magnitude of what we are proposing, think back to the 14th and 15th century, when the maps of the world pictured oceans roiling with sea beasts. The compass and astrolabe were not yet commonly used navigational tools, and those oceans were uncharted. The western route to the Indies was envisioned as a much shorter route around a much smaller globe, without an intervening land mass that we now know as America. We know the adventures and misadventures spawned by an inability to clearly map the route from home to destination.

The difference an accurate map makes. Compare this with the ease with which, today, we chart real and imagined journeys, atlas in hand. Once we settle on our destination, our planning has little in common with those early explorers. What a difference in our knowledge of precisely where we are headed—how far it lies from where we are, what obstacles intervene. Based on this knowledge—and knowledge of our own preferences, needs and resources—what a difference in our ability to choose a route and mode of transportation that we can count on to get us to our destination.

A precise course for educational journeys. What if we had this same certitude when charting our educational journeys as adults? What if we had a framework for adult and lifelong learning that we could rely on to help us make choices at particular points in our lives and, at the same time, was broad and flexible enough to serve as a guide for learning throughout our adult lives? That is exactly what we hope the role maps will enable us to do.

Charting a Course

Imagine Gail, a frontline worker in a company that is seeking to build productivity by giving individual workers control over more parts of a particular process. Suddenly Gail is no longer the top worker in her department: she finds herself increasingly responsible for carrying out tasks that she just doesn't feel she knows how to do.

Instead of getting frustrated and quitting, or relying on trial and error to get right what is now wrong, Gail can sit down, by herself or with a counselor, spread the worker role map out in front of her, and find the key area of responsibility where she is experiencing a need for new knowledge and skills. Then, looking at the network of knowledge and skills required to carry out those responsibilities, Gail can identify what she already knows as well as what she needs to learn. Clear about where she is starting from, her destination, and the possible routes between, Gail can chart a route that will get her where she wants to go.

Gail's story (see previous box) points to several benefits of using role maps to chart lifelong learning:

A smart tool for adult learners. Role maps make it possible for adults to take their learning into their own hands. They are a tool adults can use by themselves—or with assistance—to assess their own skills and abilities in relation to a map of what they need to know and be able to do for work, at home, or in the community, and to determine for themselves what knowledge, skills, or new understandings they need to develop.

Role maps also give adults the tools to be smart consumers as well as self-directed learners. Armed with a clear picture of what she wants and why, an adult like Gail can evaluate the offerings of local education and training institutions according to how well they seem to match her learning and scheduling needs. The role map can become the basis for a learning contract, with teacher and student agreeing up front what the desired learning outcome is—and how they will know it has been achieved.

A powerful tool for key customers of the system. Role maps give other customers of the adult learning system a tool for making sure education and training programs are aiming at the right results. Written in clear, everyday language, focused on real-world activities, role maps provide a new starting place for discussions between educational institutions and their customers about what knowledge and skills it is important to teach—and why.

- **Building meaningful curricula.** Schools and other training organizations will be able to sit down with employers in their region and use the worker role map to identify the knowledge and skill requirements of real jobs. Decentralized national programs like Head Start and Even Start will be able to use the parent/family member and the citizen/community member role maps to set a common reference point for building curricula for parent education.

- **Streamlining a "one stop" national workforce development system.** The role map's ability to provide a common reference point for defining results is its most exciting feature to policy makers and practitioners concerned with the range of education and training institutions that make up our national workforce development system. For more than a decade we have talked about building these programs into a seamless system that a customer could access from a single entry point. The role maps we are creating through *Equipped for the Future* will be a key element in making that one-stop system a reality. Organized around a given role rather than a given institutional base, the role maps will create a common language and a common framework that multiple agencies and institutions can use to chart an individual's progress in gaining necessary skills and knowledge.

- **Increasing efficiency and effectiveness.** Using role maps as a common starting point and a common goal, educational institutions in a given locality or region will be able to agree among themselves what each will be responsible for. They will be able

to eliminate duplication and redundancies, focusing curricula and training programs on building complementary sets of knowledge and skills. And they will have a simple tool for sitting down periodically with customers to update curricula in response to changes in real-world requirements.

These role maps are the starting point for developing and continuously validating *Equipped for the Future* standards for the adult literacy and basic skills part of the lifelong learning system. In this way, we can assure that the standards are directly based on what adults need to know and be able to do. There will not be a one-to-one correspondence between *Equipped for the Future* standards and specific knowledge and skills detailed in the role maps. Instead, our standards development team will look for patterns across all three fully elaborated role maps, and define standards that focus on the generative knowledge and skills needed to successfully meet the demands of modern life in each role.

Standards as a portable credential for the modern world. With the *Equipped for the Future* standards, adults will be able to easily communicate what they know and can do in relation to role maps that reflect real-world responsibilities in the family, the community, and the workplace.

- **In the family.** The *Equipped for the Future* standards will assure that adults develop the skills, knowledge and abilities to fulfill their responsibilities as their children's first teachers, and to create an environment at home that supports and encourages learning. By focusing on building learners' capacity to access and use information and resources, the standards will increase family members' ability to support healthy growth and development, and to work with schools and other institutions within the community, holding them accountable for the results they promise.

- **In the community.** The *Equipped for the Future* standards will help strengthen our democracy by enhancing the quality and quantity of civic participation across the country. By focusing adult literacy and lifelong learning on developing the knowledge and skills essential to informed civic participation, the standards will support the evolution of citizens who work with the officials they elect to hold them accountable, who help reconstruct the community institutions that connect us to one another, and who mobilize resources for solutions to community problems.

Generative knowledge and skills are requisite for the performance of a wide range of tasks and activities, across multiple adult roles. What distinguishes our concept of generative skills from the more commonly used cross-functional skill category is that generative skills are also durable over time, in the face of changes in technology, work process, and societal demands. They are the foundation for our effective adaptation to changes in our role requirements.

- **In the workplace.** The *Equipped for the Future* standards will help achieve a more flexible workforce and a more productive workplace. By refocusing the adult literacy curricula on the full range of foundation skills adults need in their roles as workers, the standards will contribute to building the skills and abilities adults need to work effectively within the context of the workplace, and to take on greater responsibility for quality and results. Just as important, the *Equipped for the Future* standards will focus on building the planning and learning to learn skills that are key to adapting to changes in technology and organization within the workplace, assuring adults have that bridge to future they need.

***Equipped for the Future*'s real-life standards for a changing world.** Built around a common set of real-world knowledge and skills, the *Equipped for the Future* standards will help adult learners transfer what they learn from one context to another. And in learning how the knowledge and skills from one role can be applied to other roles, adult learners will be maximizing the benefits of effective adult literacy and lifelong learning.

Chapter 5

The Journey

"Reform is a Journey, not a Destination."

In 1993, the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) invited adult learners to help shape adult education policy by telling us what they needed to know and be able to do in order to achieve National Education Goal Six. Their responses launched the NIFL on this journey to reform the adult literacy and lifelong learning system. The journey has six consecutive stages, outlined in the chart on this page. The most important stage is the one we are engaged in right now: building broad-based consensus on what adults need to know and be able to do in order to achieve the four purposes in relation to their roles as parents, citizens, and workers.

Stage I: Building Consensus

We are now in the third phase of the consensus-building process. Each of the three phases is described below.

Phase 1: Surveying adult learners. In the first phase of the consensus-building process, our survey of adult learners gave us the framework for *Equipped for the Future*. The four purposes for learning that emerged from their responses provide a customer-defined quality check for adult literacy curricula.

Equipped for the Future's
Six Stages

Stage 1
Build consensus on what adults need to know and be able to do to achieve the four purposes in relation to adults' roles as parents, citizens, and workers.

Stage 2
Develop content standards and performance indicators that translate this knowledge and skills into a clear set of results for adult literacy and basic skills.

Stage 3
Pilot the standards in adult learning sites across the country to test how well they work in the broad range of adult learning contexts.

Stage 4
Determine what needs to be done to focus the adult literacy and basic skills system on achieving these results.

Stage 5
Identify what resources are necessary to assure that the system can be held accountable for meeting these results.

Stage 6
Put in place quality assurance systems that require continuous improvement based on continuous assessment of results.

In overwhelming numbers, adult learners told us that learning should enable them to:

- **Gain access to information so they can orient themselves in the world.**
- **Find their voice, and speak with the assurance they can be heard.**
- **Make decisions and act independently, without having to rely on others.**
- **Build a bridge to the future, by learning how to learn so they can keep up with change.**

Evaluating what we teach in terms of the extent to which it enables adults to achieve these purposes helps to ensure that we are preparing them to meet their responsibilities at home and in the community, as parents, citizens, and workers.

Phase 2: Outreach, discussion, and inquiry.

In the second phase of *Equipped for the Future*'s consensus-building process, we began to explore what this new framework might mean for adult learning. Through planning grants, workshops, and presentations at conferences and meetings, we engaged several thousand Americans with a stake in our adult learning systems—teachers and learners, policymakers and administrators, public officials and everyday citizens—in examining the resiliency of the *Equipped for the Future* framework. What we learned during those 15 months of outreach, discussion, and inquiry affirmed that this framework of purposes and roles is an excellent starting place for building a stronger, more effective adult learning system.

The four purposes for learning. We found an extraordinary consensus on the value of the four purposes in defining what is important to include in curricula for adult programs. One of the major frustrations described by adult learners and adult literacy professionals alike is that the current definition of what counts as progress in adult literacy excludes the affective and effective dimensions of learner gains, even though these domains of knowledge and skill are critical to successful functioning as parents, citizens, and workers. The four purposes make these dimensions explicit, encouraging us to focus our official curricula not only on what adults know, but how they make use of knowledge in order to make sense of experience. As a result, *Equipped for the Future*'s framework for curricula enables the incorporation of new constructivist and developmental approaches to adult education, providing a richer, more holistic, theoretical guide for literacy practice.

The three roles. We also learned that we needed to develop greater clarity and broader consensus on what it means to be a citizen, a worker, and a parent before we turned to the task of developing standards for what adults need to know and be able to do to fulfill the responsibilities of those roles. The organizations that received planning grants in Phase Two began this important work. They sponsored focus groups and inquiry projects to gather information from stakeholders in their communities about the broad areas of responsibility associated with adults' primary

roles, and to identify key activities adults typically engage in to carry out these roles. They also began to identify the knowledge and skills adults need to carry out these activities. This preliminary research has been synthesized into the role maps we are using in the current phase of *Equipped for the Future* consensus-building.

Phase 3: Building national consensus on mapping the adult roles.

The third phase of *Equipped for the Future* begins a broader, nationwide effort to build consensus on role maps for each adult role. The National Institute for Literacy has awarded major grants to three national consortia to work with us in an intensive process of standards development through consensus-building. The guidelines that will be followed by these *Equipped for the Future* Development Partners are based on what we have learned over the past three years.

During the first six months of 1997 the *Equipped for the Future* Development Partners will validate the map for each adult role with the help of a broad and inclusive circle of interested parties. This will ensure that important elements of parenting, citizenship, or work have not been omitted. Using an iterative process to consolidate learning as we go, the *Equipped for the Future* Partners will reach beyond the key adult education constituencies to include groups that have a special interest in one or more of the three adult roles.

Working from the existing role maps, our questions will include:

- What are the broad areas of responsibility adults need to be prepared to address as parents, as citizens, as workers?
- What activities are key to carrying out those responsibilities?
- What knowledge and skills do adults need to carry out those responsibilities and see themselves as able to successfully fulfill their roles as parents, as citizens and as workers as we approach the twenty-first century?

Creating these role maps is closer to the work of developing skill standards for occupations than to the work of developing K-12 content standards. It starts with defining the real-world activities all adults must perform, regardless of their level of skill or ability. Once these activities are validated, we examine the performance of adults considered by their peers to be successful in order to identify knowledge and skills requirements for these real-world activities. Our focus is what cognitive psychologist Sylvia Scribner describes as "mind in action . . . the study of cognitive processes . . . as embedded in human action in the world."[9]

Stage II: From Role Maps to Standards

Developing content standards and performance indicators. Once we consolidate input from the consensus-building process, we will be ready to develop content standards and performance indicators that translate the knowledge and skills elaborated in the role maps into a clear set of results for adult literacy and basic skills. Before we move forward, *Equipped for the Future* will ensure that the role maps are comprehensive, useful, *and* scientifically sound. We will invite cognitive scientists and experts on adult development and learning theory to review our framework to ensure that our elaboration of knowledge and skills reflects the best thinking about how adults acquire and use knowledge and skills to function in the world. The U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services—the NIFL's Federal interagency partners—will also be part of this review process.

During the summer of 1997, the *Equipped for the Future* Development Partners will work from these comprehensive role maps to identify an integrated set of content standards and performance indicators that will focus the adult literacy and basic skills system on preparing adults to meet real-world needs. *Equipped for the Future* standards will focus the system on a clear set of results, and provide a mechanism for monitoring how well the system is doing at achieving those results.

Stage III: Piloting the Standards

Standards for our standards. Throughout the process of development, and over the 1997-98 school year, *Equipped for the Future* Development Partners will work with practitioners to pilot the standards in a broad range of learning contexts to determine whether they meet our "standards for standards." We want to make sure our standards are:

- **Written in language that is clear, simple and direct, so that the many varied customers and investors in the adult education system know what results they can expect.**
- **Comprehensive enough to demystify the route to success for adult learners unsure of what they need to know and be able to do to accomplish their goals.**
- **Specific enough to be useful to teachers without dictating curriculum, materials, or methods.**
- **Focused enough to be useful to suppliers, like text book publishers, software developers, and assessment and testing specialists.**

Unless our standards can meet these criteria, they will not be a useful tool for system reform. Standards can help us identify goals, promote change, and assure quality. But they are only the "flag" to our movement for a more effective, more accountable system. Once we have identified the standards that are important for the system to meet, we need to determine what changes must be made to focus the adult literacy and lifelong learning system on achieving these results. The piloting process over the 1997-98 year will not only help us refine and validate the standards, it will also help us identify how our programs and systems need to change and what resources will be necessary to support that change.

The ship is out of the harbor. *Equipped for the Future* has traveled the first critical distance in changing the way we think about adult literacy and lifelong learning. With continued support and gathering momentum, *Equipped for the Future* will offer new opportunities for countless Americans with its initiative to (a) redefine adult literacy based on a customer-driven vision for adult literacy and lifelong learning; (b) develop standards for literacy across a variety of performance contexts, for adults as workers, citizens, and parents; and (c) use these standards to propel systemic reform.

We hope you will join us on this journey.

***Equipped for the Future* Development Partners.** Our *Equipped for the Future* Development Partners have each assembled national and regional (or state-level) advisory boards made up of representatives of key constituencies that need to be part of our consensus-building process. These advisory groups will be a key mechanism for reaching out to industry associations and labor unions, skill standards projects, and school-to-work organizations for the role of worker; family and school organizations for the role of parent; and civic and community organizations for the role of citizen.

We want you to be part of the *Equipped for the Future* standards development process, too.

- **If you are a customer of the adult learning system**—join our role map validation process. Help us make sure these role maps incorporate your real-world requirements.

- **If you are a worker in the adult learning system**—bring *Equipped for the Future* into your program. Help elaborate the knowledge and skills adults need in order to carry out their role responsibilities. Once the role maps are validated, give us your ideas about where we should draw the line for adult literacy standards. Help us test and validate the new content standards and develop performance standards that make sense for the adults who come to your program. Help develop tools for teaching and assessing in relation to the new standards.

If you would like to participate in the *Equipped for the Future* process, please send us your comments or contact us through the NIFL homepage:

http://novel.nifl.gov

- **If you are a state administrator or policy maker**—become a State Partner in *Equipped for the Future*. Bring other public and private sector leaders from your state into the role map validation process. Help us test how the role maps can be used in your one-stop system. Help us move from role maps to content and performance standards. Incorporate *Equipped for the Future* into your management information system and your program improvement system. Help us make *Equipped for the Future* standards a more effective tool for defining and measuring results.

- **If you are a member of a local, state, or national organization**—tell us about your stake in building an adult learning system that prepares adults for real-world requirements, and let us know how you would like to participate.

We believe the adult literacy and lifelong learning system *can* deliver results that matter. Using *Equipped for the Future* standards, the system can address its weaknesses and clearly demonstrate its achievements. With continuous evaluation and results-oriented assessments, the system will ensure long-range success. Most important of all, with teaching and learning focused on real-world requirements, *Equipped for the Future* can make sure that all adults have the opportunity to equip themselves for the future.

Endnotes

[1] Robert Kegan (1995) *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[2] See Irwin S. Kirsch, Ann Jungeblut, Lynn Jenkins, and Andrew Kolstad (1993) *Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Results of the National Adult Literacy Survey.* Washington, DC: US GPO, and Ivan Fellegi and Thomas J. Alexander (1995) *Literacy, Economy and Society: Results of the First International Adult Literacy Survey.* Paris: OECD.

[3] The Federal Adult Education Act funds the delivery of adult basic and secondary education in states across the country. These funds are matched by state, local and private funds. For more information about the funding infrastructure, see Office of Technology Assessment, U.S. Congress (1993) Adult Literacy and New Technologies: Tools for a Lifetime, Chapters 4 and 5.

[4] Lori A. Weiss (1995) *Adult Education: Measuring Results has Been Challenging.* Washington DC: US GAO.

[5] Mary T. Moore and Michael Savrianos (1995) *Review of Adult Education Programs and Their Effectiveness: A Background Paper for Reauthorization of the Adult Education Act.* Washington, DC: US Department of Education

[6] Malcom B. Young, Howard Fleishman, Nicholas Fitzgerald and Mark A. Morgan, *National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs.* Arlington, VA: Development Associates, Inc.

[7] These numbers are based on figures on adult education provided in the three reports referenced above. Analysis was conducted with the assistance of Bob Bickerton, State Director of Adult Education for Massachusetts and Legislative Chair for both AACE and the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education. Figures and percentages for K-12 education provided in the 1993 National Center for Education Statistics Education Digest.

[8] Sondra Gayle Stein (1995) *Equipped for the Future: A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy (p. 24).

[9] Sylvia Scribner (1988) *Head and Hand: An Action Approach to Thinking.* NY: National Center on Education and Employment Occasional Paper. Scribner contrasts this approach with the cognitive science approach that gives rise to the metaphor 'mind as computer':

> "[This approach] fails to capture significant aspects of human mental functioning. We all know that memory and thinking in daily life are not separate from, but are part of, doing. We undertake [cognitive] tasks not merely as ends in themselves but as means for achieving larger objectives and goals and we carry out those tasks in constant interaction with social and material resources and constraints".

Equipped for the Future

GLOSSARY*

Adult Learner

An adult who is engaged in formal education or training to build his or her knowledge and skills. This education or training includes the full range of education from basic education, literacy, and high school equivalency through postsecondary education and training, work-based training, proprietary school training and certification programs.

Broad Area of Responsibility (BAR)

See **Role Map**.

Citizenship

EFF is based on a customer-driven definition of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. While this definition includes the constitutional rights and responsibilities associated with being a legal citizen of the United States, it also includes broad civic rights and responsibilities associated with being a member of a community, whether one is a legal citizen of the USA or not.

Customers

Customers are adult learners and others—employers, community organizations, legislators, etc.—who benefit directly from a system which prepares adult learners to meet the four purposes of Equipped for the Future.

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* Many of the definitions in this glossary are drawn from existing documents, including: "Promises to Keep: Creating High Standards for American Students," S. Malcom, National Education Goals Panel, 1993; "Developing a Common Nomenclature for the National Voluntary Skill Standards Systems: A Beginning Glossary," Institute for Educational Leadership and DynCorp Meridian, August 1995; "School-to-Work Glossary of Terms," National School-to-Work Office, Washington, DC, July 1996; and "The Business Educationary: A Business Guide to the Language of Education," The Center for Workforce Preparation and Quality Education, Washington, DC, 1991.

Equipped for the Future (EFF)

A key solution to the challenge of helping all adults become more effective workers, citizens, parents, and lifelong learners for the twenty-first century. A standards-based approach to reforming the field of adult literacy and improving linkages among the myriad public and private sector programs that support adults in lifelong learning.

EFF Development Partners

The national teams that are developing the EFF standards for each role and working with the National Institute for Literacy to catalyze reforms in the adult literacy system.

Generative Skills

Skills or knowledge that are core to the performance of a wide range of tasks found in multiple roles and that are durable over time in face of changes in technology, work process, and societal demands. Generative skills are cross-functional and serve as the foundation for effective adaptation to changes in role requirements.

Human Resource Development System

The myriad public and private programs that are linked by their focus on building the skills and knowledge of youth and adults, including: adult and family literacy programs, K-12 education programs, school-to-work programs, vocational education and training programs, community college/postsecondary education programs, industry-based skill standards programs, Job Training Partnership Act programs, one-stop career centers, dislocated worker programs, welfare-to-work programs, and related programs in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Key Activity

See **Role Map**.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)

See **Role Map**.

Lifelong Learning

A continuous process that adults undertake to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills, and understanding required throughout their lifetimes, and to apply them with confidence, creativity, and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and settings.

Literacy and Adult Learning Programs

Programs that serve adults who score in the bottom two of the five levels of reading, writing, and math skills identified by the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), who do not speak English well, or who do not have a high school degree. These programs are known as Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE).

Practitioner

A teacher, volunteer, or administrator of a program of literacy and lifelong learning.

Purposes for Literacy

Identified by over 1,500 adult learners and literacy practitioners nationwide, these are the four general purposes that literacy serves in helping adults fulfill their roles as citizen/community member, worker, and parent as. The purposes are:

- Enabling **access** to information so adults can orient themselves in the world.
- Enabling adults to give **voice** to their ideas with the confidence they will be heard.
- Enabling adults to **make decisions** and **act independently**, without needing to rely on others.
- Building a **bridge to the future** by laying a foundation for continued learning, so adults can keep up with the world as it changes.

Role

One of the three adult roles addressed by the Equipped for the Future initiative: the role of parent, worker, or citizen/community member. Also see **Worker** and **Citizenship**.

Role Indicators

See **Role Map**.

Role Map

A publicly-agreed to, explicit, consensus depiction of the adult roles of worker, parent/family member, and citizen/community member. For each adult role, the role map provides a definition of the broad areas of responsibility, key activities, role indicators and the knowledge, skills, and abilities adults require to fulfill these roles effectively and meet the demands of modern society. The role map is defined by adults who have demonstrated success in the performance of the role and then refined by key stakeholders. It makes explicit what is required to achieve the four purposes of adult literacy. It provides a common definition of role requirements that can be used as the blueprint for building an effective system of human resource development across myriad public and private organizations. The EFF process of

standards development uses partial role maps as the first stage of standards development, as shown below. The components of the role map are:

- **Key Purpose**—The part of the role map that defines the central aim of the role.

- **Broad Area Of Responsibility (BAR)**—The critical functions that an adult performs within the role to achieve the role's key purpose. They represent large segments of role performance and provide a high level definition of the critical areas of action found in each role.

- **Key Activity—** Key activities 1) show how knowledge, skills and abilities come togeher in actual practice; 2) can be demonstrated, observed, and assessed; and 3) can be expressed as an outcome. Key activities are NOT areas of knowledge or skill: rather, they show how adults *combine* knowledge, skills, abilities and personal characteristics to perform a particular adult role. They consist of of *serveral* adult tasks, not just one task or a series of steps. Key activities do not contain evaluative statements or mastery statements such as "correctly" or "promptly."

- **Role Indicators**—Role indicators answer the question, "how do I know a key activity has been performed well?" Role indicators are evaluative. They define effective performance for each key activity found in the role map. Role indicators relate to either the product or outcome of the key activity or the way the activity is carried out. Role indicators describe the qualities one expects of the outcomes and what is critical about the way the key activity is carried out. For instance, a role indicator tells us that a parent prepares meals successfully when the meals are nutritious or that a worker greets customers effectively by smiling and greeting them by name.

- **Knowledge, Skills, And Abilities (KSAs)**—These are the key elements that an adult needs to perform the key activities.

  Knowledge: The foundation upon which skills and abilities are built. Knowledge refers to an organized body of information applied to performance of a key activity. Examples of knowledge include: mathematical concepts, languages, biology, and finance.

  Skills: Developed capacities to perform physical or mental tasks. Examples of skills are: cooking, reading, and operating machinery.

  Abilities: Enduring attributes of individuals that influence skill development and performance (e.g. cognitive, psychomotor, physical and sensory).

Skill Standards

Standards that specify the level of knowledge and competence required to successfully perform work-related functions within a specific occupational/industry sector. These standards are being developed along a skill continuum ranging from (1) general work readiness skills, (2) core skills or knowledge for an industry, (3) skills common to an idustry/occupational sector, and (4) specific occupational skills. Skill standards are being developed by over 22 business-led partnerships in such areas as manufacturing, metalworking, welding, electronics, computer aided

drafting and design, chemical process industries, retail trade, hospitality and tourism, health care, and grocery. The *National Skill Standards Board* was established by federal legislation to ensure the development of a national system of voluntary skill standards.

Stakeholder

National, state or local organizations and individuals (in the public, nonprofit and private sectors) that have a vested interest in developing standards for the relevant role because the quality of role performance impacts their organization's achievement of its goals/mission.

Standards

The Equipped for the Future initiative is based on a vision of standards-based reform. These standards clarify the pathway for adults to achieve the four EFF purposes. The EFF standards represent a consensus definition of the scope of the field of adult literacy and of what practitioners in the field agree to be held accountable for. The EFF standards have two elements: ***content standards*** and ***performance standards.***

- **EFF Content Standards**—EFF content standards specify what adults need to know and be able to do as a result of their participation in adult literacy and lifelong learning programs.

- **EFF Performance Standards**—EFF performance standards specify "how good is good enough." They indicate both the nature of the evidence—such as an essay, mathematical proof, scientific experiment, project, exam, or combination of these—required to demonstrate that content standards have been met *and* the quality of performance that will be deemed acceptable (what merits a passing or 'A' grade).

Validation

A process used to demonstrate the degree to which the standards address the important aspects of role performance.

Worker

EFF is based on a customer-defined vision of what it takes for adults to compete in the global economy. This vision includes not only what the workplace requires of adults—regardless of position, occupation, or industry—but also what adults in today's complex society require from the workplace. To define the standards for workers, EFF will seek input from adults working in a variety of industries and occupational areas, in large, small, and mid-sized organizations, and a range of positions from entry-level positions to executive positions.

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- ❑ YES! I'm interested in learning more about *Equipped for the Future*. Please send me:
  - ❑ ***Equipped for the Future**: A Customer Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning.*
  - ❑ *Equipped for the Future* Role Maps for Citizen, Parent, and Worker.
  - ❑ NIFL Newsletter, March/April Special Issue on *Equipped for the Future*.
- ❑ YES! I would like to be on the *Equipped for the Future* Mailing List.
- ❑ YES! I'm interested in having someone from EFF come speak at our state or national meeting.
  Organization: _____
  Date: _____
  Place: _____
- ❑ YES! I would like to be part of the *Equipped for the Future* Standards Development Process. Please put me in touch with:
  - ❑ . . . the Development Partners for the Role of Citizen
  - ❑ . . . the Development Partners for the Role of Parent
  - ❑ . . . the Development Partners for the Role of Worker

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